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ABSTRACT

At the Louisiana State University Laboratory School, the 4-year course sequences in French and Spanish use American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines as a basis for planning for language skill development. In listening proficiency, the course sequence integrates teaching of listening skills with other language skills, followed by practice in listening, for both specific skill development and global understanding. For all listening activities, students should be required to do some speaking or writing in response, and should be prepared for responding. The curriculum sequence evolved in three stages: (1) high school years of study were coordinated with the ACTFL guidelines for listening, based on language functions designated for mastery; (2) course content at each level was reviewed for phonetic and structural content needed for listening skills; and (3) sequenced activities were structured for teaching and practicing effective listening. The last stage involved division of instruction and practice activities into three categories (mechanical, contrived language practice, and unadapted native speech) and the amount of time to be devoted to each was determined. Sequential listening training enhances language proficiency and student confidence. Sources of Spanish and French materials and a brief bibliography are appended. (MSE)

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M. Earlman

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Planning and Teaching For Listening Proficiency

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For years foreign language teachers have read that listening comprehension is the neglected skill in the foreign language classroom, and certainly, materials available for classroom use have tended to place greater emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking. It has been more by chance than by design that some students have become effective listeners, since there are neither sufficient listening comprehension activities nor recommendations for developing the skill in the classroom contained in most current texts. In recognition of the necessity of listening training and practice for language acquisition, Krashen (1982), Asher (1977) and others have developed specific methods for teaching language through listening. Byrnes (1984), Meyer (1984), Medley (1985), Omaggio (1986), and others have defined the fundamental role of listening in the foreign language curriculum, as well as strategies for teaching listening comprehension. Richards (1984) has developed a taxonomy of listening skills. Most recently, the development of ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for all language skills (ACTFL 1982, 1986) has affirmed the importance of listening in the total curriculum.

At the Louisiana State University Laboratory School, the four-year course sequences in French and Spanish have taken ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as a basis upon which to plan for development of language skills. In the area of listening proficiency, the four-year sequences emphasize the teaching of listening comprehension skills coordinately with other linguistic skills, followed by practice in listening, both for specific skill development and for global understanding.

Listening skills development can be easily integrated into the total foreign language curriculum. Since the ultimate goal of the language courses is to produce students capable of communication in the second language, and since proficiency is developed by means of comprehensible input (Krashen et al. 1984), daily listening and reading

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activities to be followed by speaking and writing activities are essential. We include listening activities in each class period in all four levels. Some of the activities are as simple as teacher-talk, while others are progressively more structured.

For all listening activities, the students should be required to do something in response. Prior to beginning the activity, they should know how they must respond. During the first year, a larger percent of the total listening time (35 percent) is directed to training in listening for syntax cues and other mechanical aspects of the language. In the following three years, the percent of listening time devoted to mechanical aspects of the language decreases until at Level IV it is 5 percent or less.

Development of the listening sequence in our curriculum evolved in three stages. First the high school years of study were correlated with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Listening (ACTFL 1982, 1986) based on which language functions the students would be expected to master at each level of instruction. Specifically, in the first-year course, students are expected to reach Intermediate-Low on the ACTFL scale. The students would be able to understand sentence-length utterances which are recombinations of learned elements in a limited number of content areas. Their understanding may be uneven; they may ask for repetition and rewording.

In the second-year course, students should progress to Intermediate-Mid level. Students in French II or Spanish II should understand simple questions and simple conversations. These students, too, may need repetition or rewording and still have difficulty understanding conversation at normal rate. Their vocabulary is still very limited.

By the end of the third-year course, students should function at Intermediate-High level, including understanding questions and answers, simple face-to-face conversations in standard speech. Students should understand the main ideas and some details of short telephone conversations, media announcements, and other authentic material. The vocabulary is generally limited to personal background and needs. In conversation, the students may need some repetition or rewording and generally will need a slightly slowed rate of speech.

In the fourth-year of language study, the students continue to develop at Intermediate-High, and some students reach the Advanced Level, as their mastery of vocabulary and structure continues.

In the second stage of course development, course content for each level was reviewed to determine what information about the sounds

of the language students must have in order to carry out the appropriate listening functions. A crucial point here is that the development of good listening skills is dependent upon the students learning 1) where various structure indicators occur in spoken language, 2) what sounds those various structure indicators have, and 3) how to anticipate structural patterns in the language they are learning. If students internalize these concepts, and if they are given sufficient practice in the first two years of language study, their future tasks in listening are much facilitated.

The third stage of course development consisted of structuring sequenced activities for teaching and practicing the listening concepts to permit students to become effective listeners. Instruction and practice activities at all levels of instruction are divided into three categories: mechanical, contrived language practice, and unadapted native speech. The approximate percent of time used for each category, out of the total time devoted to listening comprehension at each level, is as follows:

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Mechanical	35%	20%	5%	1-5%
Contrived Language Practice	60%	75%	75%	75%
Unadapted Native Speech	5%	5%	20%	20-25%

The first category, Mechanical, includes instruction and practice of discrimination of sounds, intonation patterns, and structure indicators. The teaching of mechanical concepts uses teacher explanation, teacher models, tape models, and visual representations, such as diagrams and simple charts. In early practice activities, students respond by checking appropriate blocks or columns, marking words or pictures, or by giving other non-verbal responses, in order to minimize oral production by students as they concentrate on the listening skill. In the upper levels, students may respond in one of the ways listed, or they may select an appropriate printed sentence choice, or respond orally, indicating their comprehension of the structure.

The second category, Contrived Listening Practice, includes all ranges of instruction and practice in "getting the message" except unadapted native speech. Contrived Listening Comprehension practice comprises the greatest portion of listening activity. In addition to the taped exercises provided with the text, the teacher incorporates a variety of activities with gestures, props, and visuals to enhance understanding. In Levels I and II students are rarely required to give an oral response to listening skill activities. Included in this category are teacher-talk, total physical response (TPR) activities, dictations, visual-fill-in activities, selected listening, rejoinders, reverse rejoinders, and listening with visual props. Teacher-talk is important: it is tailored to the students' needs, and it demonstrates that the language is "real"—that it is used for communication. Another technique which the students enjoy is "Look, listen, think and write," in which students see a filmstrip based on their unit of study and listen to the accompanying tape which was prepared by native speakers of the language. After viewing the filmstrip, the students listen to the recording a second time with their eyes closed. Next, with their eyes still closed, they think for two minutes about what they saw and heard. Finally, the students write words, phrases, and sentences based on what they remember from the filmstrip and tape. The students not only enjoy this activity, but they progress rapidly from writing only words to writing phrases and sentences as their comprehension and auditory memory increase.

Contrived language practice in Levels III and IV may include any of the activities used in Levels I and II, as well as others which are more advanced. Students are asked to give verbal responses, or to read and choose among responses. Other techniques used at these levels include expectation listening, note-taking, selective listening, longer dictations, comprehension checks, and story line. For story line, students read together the first chapter of a story and discuss in the second language what they think will happen. In the following days, individual students recount orally each of the succeeding chapters until all the story has been told. The students, then, after reading chapter 1, only hear the rest of the story, asking for discussion and clarification as needed, all in the second language. Upon completion of the story, students must turn in a paper or other project approved by the teacher to show they understood the story.

The third category, Unadapted Native Speech, uses the speech of native speakers through visitors to the class, cassette tapes, interviews, videotapes, records, etc. Listening to native speakers in an unmodified

authentic situation can be very frustrating to a Level I student, and yet there are benefits from hearing the natural sound and flow of authentic speech samples. To prevent or minimize frustration, the listening activities must be well defined: students are instructed to listen just for the rhythm of the language, or to listen for colors or other adjectives, or to listen for numbers in a television commercial. In weather forecasts, students are asked to listen for specific weather words.

In Levels III and IV, the amount of time devoted to native speech increases. Use of authentic materials which are culturally rich provides the students with more cues for understanding, such as context and redundancy. Additionally, recordings of short situations of high predictability in which the lexicon and basic structures are known, allow the students to become accustomed to different voice qualities, different rates of speech, identifying syllable boundary phenomena, etc. Appropriate activities include getting the gist of taped interviews, movies and long narratives, stories, folktales, news broadcasts, or other native speech. Prior to beginning a listening activity, the teacher should help the students "tune in" by giving them the basic context and any other necessary clues or cultural background in order for them to understand and anticipate what will follow.

Another technique which allows upper level students to stretch their listening both for details and for implications is expectation listening, in which students listen to part of a tape or videotape, then figure out how to end the selection, based on their understanding. Students also practice listening for socio-linguistic factors to determine the linguistic register used and surmise the relationship between people in a passage. A partial list of supplemental materials for listening used at the Laboratory School is included in the Appendix.

The inclusion of sequential listening training, correlated with the other language skills enables more of our students to reach higher levels of language proficiency. Additionally, the students enjoy their enhanced ability, feeling better prepared to communicate in their second language. Their training in how to master language will also assist them in or out of the classroom in their future contact with the language they have studied.

Appendix

Sources of Materials for Developing Listening Comprehension

SPANISH

Students' Reading Dialogs II, III

Teachers' Auditory Dialogs II, III

From: AMSCO School Publications, Inc.
315 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10013

ALM Filmstrip series with tapes: Level II

From: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
1372 Peachtree St., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30367

Children's Records

Villa Alegre

Sesame Street

From: any music store, or write Public Television

Parchis Internacional

Villancicos

From: CBS International
383 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dictados en Español

Tipos Y Paisajes de Español, II

Blanca Nieves y los siete Enanos

La Ranita

From: Discos Coro
Marca Registrada
Bahia de Perula 80
Mexico 17

Poesia Hispánica

From: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
 (A Division of CBS Publishing)
 383 Madison Avenue
 New York, NY 10022

Filmstrips with sound**Level**

<i>La Pequeña Vendedora de Fósforos</i>	II
<i>Los Tres Cerditos</i>	I, II
<i>Los Tres Osos</i>	I, II
<i>Platero y Yo</i>	II
<i>Don Quijote de la Mancha</i>	II, III
<i>Escenas Cortas</i>	I, II
<i>Si, Comprendo Español</i>	I-IV
<i>Cuentos y Historietas</i>	III, IV
<i>Claro</i>	I-IV
<i>Ahora a Jugar</i>	I, II
<i>Entrevistas</i>	III, IV
<i>Aires Favoritas</i>	I-IV

From: Gessler Publishing Co., Inc.
 900 Broadway
 New York, NY 10003-1291

<i>Asi son los mexicanos</i>	I-IV
<i>El Novio Robado</i>	II-IV
<i>El Concierto Siniestro</i>	II-IV
<i>Caminos Peligrosos</i>	I, II
<i>Zarabanda</i>	I, II
<i>Eso Es</i>	III, IV
<i>Por Aquel</i>	III, IV

From: EMC Publishing
 300 York Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55101

FRENCH**Listening Programs***Champs-Élysées*

From: Champs-Élysées
Nashville, TN
(Call the 800 directory for their toll-free number.)

Canadian Radio News

From: Radio Canada International
Recorded Programmes/Emissions enregistrées
C.P./P.O. Box 6000
Montréal, QUEBEC
Canada H3C 3A8
(They supply a recording of excerpts from news
and documentary broadcasts. There are four units
of approximately 3 minutes each on each record.)

Média-Louisiane: Phone (318) 233-1020. They rent movies in French,
including cartoons, TV programs, and movies
from Louisiana and Canada.

*Drôle de Mission**Poursuite Inattendue**Suivez la Piste*

From: EMC
300 York Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 1-800-328-1452

Books that are excellent for "Story Line"*Dans le Métro**Le Trésor**Pas de Vacances pour le commissaire**La Fugue d'Isabelle**Prisunic*

From: EMC (address and phone number above)

Bilingual Fables

From: National Textbook Co.
4255 West Touhy Avenue
Lincolnwood, IL 60646-1975

ALM Filmstrip series with tapes: Level II

ALM Filmstrip series with records: Level I

From: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich (see above)

French: Practice Testing, Levels I, II, and Comprehensive

From: AMSCO School Publications, Inc.
315 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10013

Filmstrips with sound

Les Trois petits cochons

Voici la Maison

Le Prince pain d'épices

Les Trois petits chats

La Petite Fille aux allumettes

From: Gessler Publishing Co., Inc.
900 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Cassettes

J'écoute et j'entends

From: Gessler Publishing Co., Inc. (see above)

Video

La Publicité en France

From: Gessler Publishing Co., Inc. (see above)

France From Within

The French Way

From: Heinle and Heinle
20 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Book and Cassette*Communication +1**Communication +2*

From: C.E.C.

Librairie Michel Fortin, Inc.

3714, rue Saint-Denis

Montréal, QUEBEC

Canada H2X 3L7

phone: (514) 849-5719

(These books contain listening, speaking, reading and writing activities centered on daily activities and daily culture. They are excellent!)

Records*The Voices of La Salle: Expedition II*

From: La Salle Expedition II

135 S. La Salle Street

Room 411

Chicago, IL 60603

La Planète des MICS

From: TransCanada Disques (De GROUPE

QUEBECOR, INC)

7033 Route Transcanada

Ville St-Laurent

Quebec H4T 1S2

Music of the World: for catalog, write:

Monitor Records

156 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10010

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